



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

*Madrid*

Semester	Fall 2017
Course	THEO-2930 Special Topics: The Qur'an and the Bible
Classroom:	PRH 2
Class Days and Time	MWF 12:00–12:50
Prerequisite(s)	THEO-100
Credit(s)	3
Professor	Dr. Carlos A. Segovia
Professor's e-mail	carlos.segovia@slu.edu
Office	SIH 315
Office hours	TR 11:00–12:00 (and by appointment)

## 1. Course purpose and objectives

Notwithstanding its distinctively discontinuous style, the Qur'an repeatedly draws on the stock of biblical stories and legends, which one often finds elliptically reworked in its pages. Occasionally, however, such reworked stories are better understood in light of their para-biblical, both Jewish and Christian, glosses, on which the Qur'an relies as well, therefore. But what is the ultimate purpose of these complex intertextual strategies and how must they be approached and classified? Is it possible to speak of the Qur'an, at least partly, as an exegetical work? And if so, what would this imply? Can the study of the biblical and para-biblical stories in the Qur'an, moreover, help to shed light on the development of the theological debates that took place in the 7th-century Near East? Lastly, which are the intertextual connections susceptible of being established between prophecy, eschatology, and messianology in the Qur'an – and how do they affect our understanding of Islam's origins?

Students who successfully complete the course will have achieved the following learning objectives:

- to canvass the main results achieved in the contemporary study of quranic intertextuality
- to discern the message of the Qur'an in its inherent complexity and historical context
- to critically assess the implications of the above-referred notions for the compared study of the Qur'an and the Bible
- to determine, by one's own lights, how to better deal with all the aforementioned issues

## 2. Course description

The course combines lectures and workshops relative to three major thematic sections:

- I ARABS, CHRISTIANS, JEWS, AND THE BIBLE IN PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA
- II JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN THE QUR'AN
- III REWORKED BIBLICAL STORIES IN THE QUR'AN

Most of the work on these issues will be carried out through the reading, multi-layered examination, and thorough discussion of a number of quranic texts.

### 3. Textbook

The text for the course is Muhammad A. S. Abdel Haleem. *The Qur'an: A New Translation*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

It is required and available at SLU Madrid bookshop.

Nevertheless, a Kindle edition can be purchased at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

### 4. Supplementary bibliography

- Block, C. Jonn. *The Qur'an in Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Historical and Modern Interpretations*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Griffith, Sidney H. *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Hawting, Gerald E. *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemics to History*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Hodge, Caroline Johnson. *If Sons, then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Lodahl, Michael. *Claiming Abraham: Reading the Bible and the Qur'an Side by Side*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010.
- Newby, Gordon D. *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990.
- Rahman, Fazlur. *Major Themes of the Qur'an*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Reeves, John C., ed. *Bible and Qur'ān: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
- Reynolds, Gabriel Said. *The Qur'ān and Its Biblical Subtext*. London and New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Segovia, Carlos A. *The Quranic Noah and the Making of the Islamic Prophet: A Study of Intertextuality and Religious Identity Formation in Late Antiquity*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2015.
- Sperling, S. David. *The Original Torah: The Political Intent of the Bible's Authors*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1998.
- Ter Borg, Marlies, ed. *Sharing Mary: Bible and Qur'an Side by Side*. Lexington, KY: Create-Space, 2010.
- Wheeler, Brannon M. *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis*. London and New York: Continuum, 2002.

## 5. Students' requirements and grading rationale – with a note on attendance

In this course final grades are calculated as a weighted average of three scores: two exams and participation. The scores are weighted as follows:

Midterm exam:	33.33%
Final exam:	33.33%
Participation:	33.33%

**Exams:** The exams must be taken on the dates assigned (see Section 6 below). Violations of this policy will result in the loss of a grade point (from B to C, for example) in all but the most exceptional cases.

**Participation:** This component of your final grade will be based on oral exercises and commitment to the class discussions.

Please note that, as a student in this course, you are required to adhere to the university's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating, falsification, and plagiarism are strictly forbidden. Plagiarism is the intentional representation of someone else's thoughts or words as if they were one's own. Any violation of this policy will result in an F for the pertinent academic exercise. A detailed statement of the policy may be found at [http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic\\_advising/docs/Academic\\_integrity.pdf](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic_advising/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf).

Seven or more absences FOR ANY REASON constitute an unrecoverable loss of course content and will result in an F for the course. Mobile phones, computers, and tablets are to be switched OFF in class. Students are expected not to interrupt class by leaving the room and returning during the class period.

## 6. Course calendar

### (A) LECTURES

#### I ARABS, CHRISTIANS, JEWS, AND THE BIBLE IN PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA

Sept. 4–6–8

- Introducing our topic
- Biblical- and quranic studies today
- The scriptural lore in the Qur'an
- Was there a pre-Islamic Arabic Bible?
- Approaching the Qur'an as an intertextual corpus
- Re-mapping sectarian boundaries: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Arabian peninsula on the eve of Islam
- Reasons for moving beyond a merely comparative approach
- Rethinking the Qur'an and Islam's origins

#### II JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN THE QUR'AN

- Sept. 11–13–15
- Christian, pro-Christian, and anti-Christian formulas in the Qur'an?
  - Analysing Q 61:14; 3:59-64; 4:171; 3:65-8
  - Interpreting Q 5:82; 2:40-74, 75-82, 83-103, 104-10, 111-14
  - Reconstructing a plausible historical background

III REWORKED BIBLICAL STORIES IN THE QUR'AN

- Sept. 18–20–22
- ADAM
- Adam as the first prophet?
  - God's vice-regent on earth
  - God's warning to the angels
  - Why do the angels worship Adam?
  - Comparing Q 2:30-9; 15:26-48; 38:71-85
  - Biblical and extra-Biblical sources of the quranic Adam story
  - Gen 1:26-7; 2:7; and Heb 1:6 as subtexts?
  - Satan's rebellion and Adam's fall: an altogether different tale

- Sept. 25–27–29
- NOAH
- Punishment stories in the Qur'an
  - The Qur'an as an apocalyptic text
  - The quranic Noah narratives
  - Comparing Q 7:59-64; 10:71-4; 23:23-30; 26:105-22; 54:9-17
  - Comparing Q 11:25-49; 71
  - Extra-Biblical sources of the quranic Noah narratives
  - An unnoticed key issue: Noah as a model for the quranic prophet

- Oct. 2–4–6
- ABRAHAM
- Abraham's monotheism and Islam
  - Revisiting Paul's Abrahamic argument in Gal 3 and Rom 4
  - The Abraham story in Q 2:136-41, its rhetoric, and its implications

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- Oct. 9
- Warm-up session

- Oct. 11
- Midterm Exam**

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III REWORKED BIBLICAL STORIES IN THE QUR'AN (CONT.)

- Oct. 16–18–20  
23–25–27
- JESUS
- Jesus' name and titles in the Qur'an
  - Christological debates in the 7th-century Near East
  - Q 3:33-63; 19:2-40, and the narratives of Jesus's birth
  - Why does Jesus speak from the cradle?
  - Jesus's teachings and miracles
  - Jesus as a messenger to the Children of Israel
  - A new case of anti-Jewish rhetoric?

- Jesus death: The interpretative problem in Qur'an 4:157
- Christian docetism, the Qur'an, and the Muslim tradition
- Jesus as the New Adam and the enigma behind Q 21:91; 66:12

Nov. 3 No class

(B) WORKSHOPS

Nov. 6–8–10 • Analysing and interpreting Q 108; 91:1-10; 100:1-5

Nov. 13–15–17 • Analysing and interpreting Q 61:6; 3:144; 33:40; 47:2; 48:29

Nov. 20 • Analysing and interpreting Q 105

Nov. 22–24 • Reassessing the Dome of the Rock inscriptions

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Nov. 27–29–Dec. 4 Students' presentations

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Dec. 11 Online invited talk – Prof. Guillaume Dye (Free University of Brussels)

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Dec. 13 Warm-up session

Dec. 19 **Final Exam** (12:00)

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Please bear in mind the following dates, as well:

Sept. 17 Last day to drop a class without a grade of W and/or add a class  
Last day to choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) options

Oct. 12 Holiday (University closed)

Oct. 13 Holiday (University closed)

Oct. 16 Last day to submit Transfer Application for spring semester

Oct. 30 Last day to drop a class and receive a grade of W

Nov. 1 Holiday (University closed)

Nov. 2 Registration for Spring 2018 semester begins

Nov. 3	No class
Nov. 9	Holiday (University closed)
Dec. 6	Holiday (University closed)
Dec. 8	Holiday (University closed)

Note: Campus and course announcements will often be handled by e-mail. Students should check their “@slu.edu” e-mail regularly.

## **7. Guidelines for taking your exams and participating in the workshops**

In your midterm exam you will be asked to analyse a text relative to sections I-III of the programme (see Section 6 above). In turn, in your final exam you will be asked to formulate a question relative to sections III-VI of the programme and to briefly elaborate on it with the help of two concepts of your choice. You will be allowed to bring your class and home notes to both exams. No other materials will be admitted, though.

Participation in the workshops is mandatory – that is to say, all students will be asked to take part in, and actively contribute to, these.

## **8. Academic integrity**

*Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors.* The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at <https://www.slu.edu/the-office-of-the-provost/academic-affairs-policies>. Additionally, SLU-Madrid has posted its academic integrity policy online: <https://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics/student-resources/academic-advising/policies-and-procedures#43>. As a member of the University community, you are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions and appeals.

The professor will review these matters during the first weeks of the term. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program or the Academic Dean of the Madrid Campus.

## **9. Collection of student work for assessment**

Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, the Campus regularly assesses its teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs is kept on file, such as assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. *Thus, copies of student work for this course, including written assignments, in-class exercises, and exams may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes.* If students prefer that Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus does not keep their work on file, they need to communicate their decision in writing to the professor.

## 10. Students with special needs

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to <https://www.slu.edu/madrid/campus-life/student-services/disability-services>.

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations **must** contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also **must** notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu) or +915 54 58 58, ext. 230 for an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services. For more information about academic accommodations, see "Student Resources" on the SLU-Madrid webpage.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

## 11. Title IX statement

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 ([mmaruri@slu.edu](mailto:mmaruri@slu.edu); 915-54-5858, ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your

experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall ([counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu); 915-54-5858, ext. 230) or Sinews Multipletherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid ([www.sinews.es](http://www.sinews.es); 917-00-1979). To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: <http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf>.